



WIC National Breastfeeding Promotion Project Facts

WHAT ?

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman has proclaimed the week of August 1 to 7 as WIC National Breastfeeding Week, kicking off a year-long campaign to promote breastfeeding among WIC participants.

WHEN ?

The promotion begins the week of August 1-7, which is also World Breastfeeding Week, and will last for one year.

WHO ?

USDA has joined with Best Start Social Marketing, Inc., in a cooperative agreement to develop the WIC National Breastfeeding Promotion Project, which is national in scope and is being implemented at the State level. Ten pilot State agencies — Iowa, Arkansas, Nevada, California, New Jersey, West Virginia, Ohio, New York, Mississippi, and the Chickasaw Indian Tribal Organization — were selected to participate in the campaign. Other State agencies will participate as their resources permit.

BACKGROUND:

The goals of the project are to encourage WIC participants to begin and to continue breastfeeding; to increase referrals to WIC for breastfeeding support; to increase general public acceptance and support of breastfeeding; and to provide support and technical assistance to WIC State and local professionals in the promotion of breastfeeding.

Pilot States were selected on the basis of interest among State and local WIC directors and breastfeeding coordinators; their commitment to the full one-year project period; extent of breastfeeding activities; breastfeeding rates; local agency characteristics such as size, urban and rural locations, affiliation (health department, nonprofit agency, etc.), and ability to provide participant demographic information.

States that participate in the WIC National Breastfeeding Promotion Project will receive support in the form of social marketing research; a media campaign; a staff support kit; a breastfeeding resource guide; a training conference; and continuing education and technical assistance.

Data on attitudes and determinants of breastfeeding among WIC participants were collected in the 10 pilot States from WIC participants, their family members, WIC staff, and health care providers.

The USDA partnership in the campaign formally began at a breastfeeding promotion training conference April 16-19, 1997 in Alexandria, Virginia. Best Start, a social marketing firm based in Florida, unveiled breastfeeding promotion materials carrying the campaign's slogan, "Loving Support Makes Breastfeeding Work." The materials consist of pamphlets, posters, and radio and television public service announcements that address barriers and encourage breastfeeding.

At the Alexandria conference, representatives from the 10 pilot WIC States, local staff, and other interested WIC State agencies received training and technical assistance through Best Start. The training focused on coalition building, utilizing local media, promoting effective breastfeeding counseling strategies, counseling techniques, and managing peer counseling programs.

